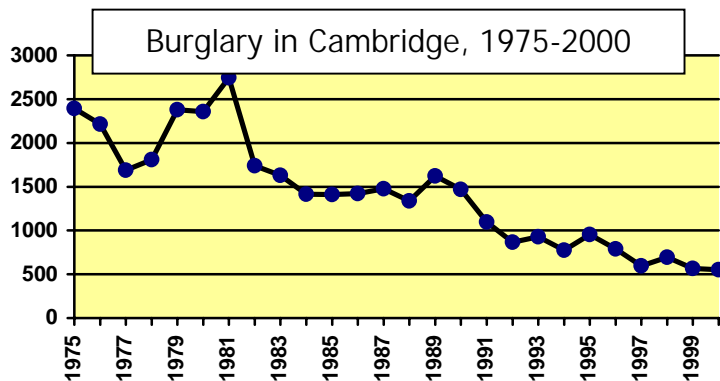


# Burglary

567 in 1999 • 552 in 2000 • Down 3%



*Burglary* describes the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The use of force to gain entry is not required to classify an offense as burglary. Burglary attempts are included in the total.

Burglary is considered a much graver crime than larceny, since it usually involves breaking into someone's home or business. Great diversity exists within the ranks of burglars: a great many are "crude," unrefined thieves who, with little finesse, will smash a window and enter an unoccupied house or building. Because long-term success at burglary involves innovation, risk, and proficiency, the crime is often associated with "professional," master thieves who disable alarm systems and steal oil paintings and oriental rugs.

The latter type of burglar—the professional thief who used to commit 200 to 300 housebreaks per year, many in wealthy residential locations—has become a dinosaur. He has been put out of business by priority prosecution programs, patrol and investigative strategies, and early detection of patterns. The demise of this "one-man crime wave" has caused burglary to plunge 76 percent since 1980 and 61 percent since 1990. The 2000 total is the lowest burglary statistic the Cambridge Police Department has reported since we started measuring crime in the 1960s.

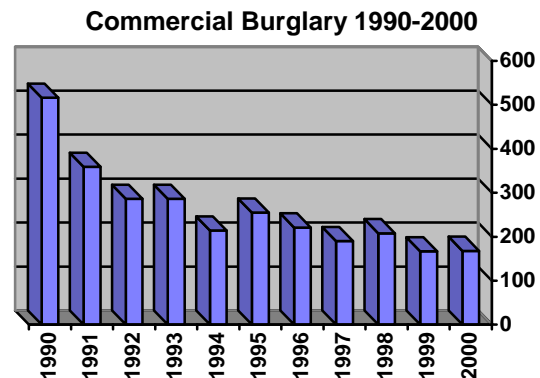
Burglaries in Cambridge are evenly spread throughout the day, with more business breaks occurring at night and on weekends, and more residential breaks occurring during the workday. Seldom does a resident or business owner encounter a burglar, and only very rarely (except in the case of domestic burglaries) does a resident come to harm during a burglary.

For the purpose of analysis, the crime of burglary is divided into two categories: Commercial Burglary and Residential Burglary ("housebreaks"). Commercial breaks showed a .06 percent increase in 2000, while housebreaks decreased 4 percent.

Type	1999	2000	Change
Commercial Burglary	167	168	+.06%
Residential Burglary	400	384	-4%

## Commercial Burglary

Commercial burglary, or commercial breaks, describes the burglary of a business, government, or retail establishment. This crime has experienced decreases over the past 10 years, but not as dramatically as residential burglary.



Commercial burglars target a miscellany of establishments. The type of business targeted speaks volumes about the offender's likely status and style, and commercial breaks can therefore be categorized by the type of premises entered. Most breaks fall into one of six broad categories:

- **Smash & Grab** burglaries target display windows along major routes. The burglar runs or drives up, smashes the window, steals valuables from the immediate area of the window, and runs off. The entire enterprise may take less than a minute.
- **Retail** burglars pry or smash their way into stores, hair salons, restaurants, and other locations with cash registers on the premises. They're hoping for cash left in the register or the safe. They may grab some cigarettes or a stack of

lottery tickets on the way out. Retail burglars who target restaurants specifically often cross multiple jurisdictions, breaking into similar franchises, looking for safes.

- **Business** burglars enter real estate offices, law firms, technology companies, and other offices, looking for laptop computers and other expensive equipment.
- **Construction Site** thieves are a special breed of burglars who know how to select, steal, and sell expensive power tools, building supplies, and heavy equipment. They are often in the business themselves, and may have done some sub-contract work on the site that they target.
- **Church** burglars are usually homeless individuals with substance abuse problems. They enter lightly-secured houses of worship, looking for petty cash and easily fenced items.
- **School** burglars are generally juveniles, breaking into their own schools to vandalize or to steal computers and other expensive goods that they see every day.

Type	1998	1999	2000
Retail	37	40	32
Business Offices	32	23	20
Construction Sites	19	23	36
Restaurants/Bars	27	21	21
Churches	18	13	7
Schools	19	9	6
Jewelry Store	4	8	1
Cleaners/Laundry	2	7	9
Clothing Stores	9	7	1
Hair/Beauty	8	5	3
Auto Sales/Service	7	2	5
Government/City	5	0	4
Other	9	9	23

Jewelry store breaks and laundromat breaks were lumped together with the other "retail" burglaries until 1999, when we felt that increasing numbers warranted separate categories.

Laundromat breaks became a concern in December of 1999, when a pattern hit the Boston area. Nine breaks occurred in Cambridge in 2000, and numerous others were reported in surrounding cities and towns. Burglars entered self-service laundromats in the dead of night and smashed their way into offices, cash boxes, change machines, and telephone calling card machines. Two men in there 40's were arrested in October after they broke into cash machines in an open Laundromat. They were

arrested after changing a large quantity of quarters at a nearby supermarket.

A husband and wife team was arrested by the Cambridge Police Department in September after they were observed breaking into the 15 Cambridge Center Construction Site which had been broken into 21 times in 2000. The burglars were found to have been using two way radios and a search of their nearby home turned up a large quantity of stolen power tools. This pattern of breaks pushed construction site breaks to the number one commercial break type for 2000.

## Geography

Kendall Square/ MIT has gone from the single least likely place for a commercial break to occur to the number one business district for this crime type in 2000. A 329% increase in incidents from 1999 to 2000. This was due to the 21 incidents of construction site breaks at 15 Cambridge Center and numerous other construction sites in the immediate area, which were also broken into and were likely related.

Cambridgeport/ Riverside saw a drastic decrease in this crime type for the second year in a row from 23 in 1998 to 2 in 2000.

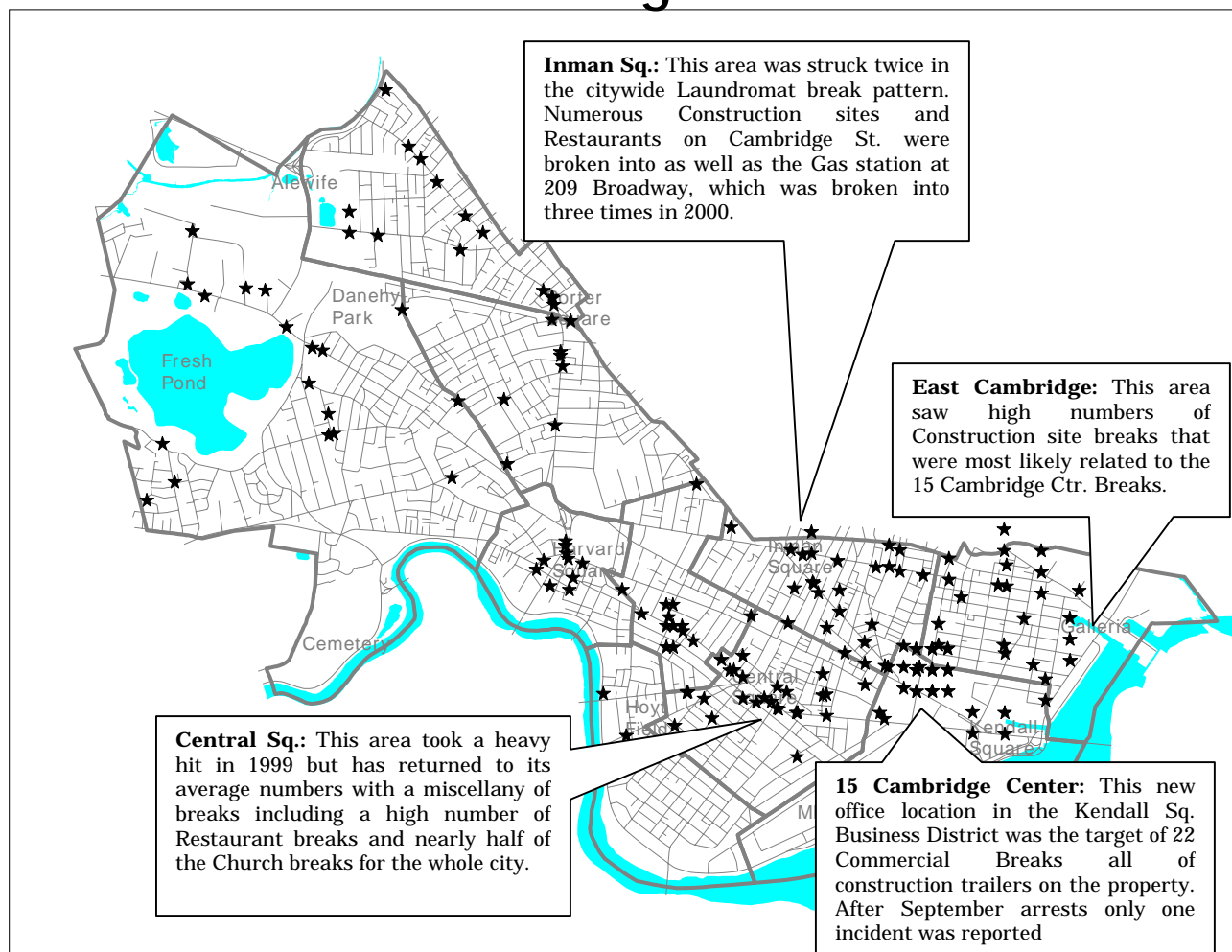
### Geographic Breakdown of Commercial Burglaries

Business District	1998	1999	2000
Galleria/East Cambridge	24	19	21
Kendall Square/MIT	4	7	30
Inman Square	12	17	26
Central Square	21	42	25
Cambridgeport/Riverside	23	9	2
Bay Square/Upper B.way	5	12	14
Harvard Square	25	19	10
1500-1900 Mass. Ave.	13	7	8
Porter Square	52	23	15
Alewife/West Cambridge	29	12	17

Inman Square saw a tremendous increase in 2000 with a wide array of breaks reported. It was hit twice in the citywide Laundromat pattern and had numerous Restaurants on Cambridge St. broken into. Construction site breaks were also a problem in this business district. The gas station at 209 Broadway was broken into 3 times through out the year.

The Bay Square area saw an increase in numbers for the second year in a row. 1000 Mass Ave. was broken into four times and 955 Mass Ave. was broken into three times throughout the year. This area was also hit once by the citywide Laundromat pattern.

# Commercial Burglaries in 2000



## Day and Time

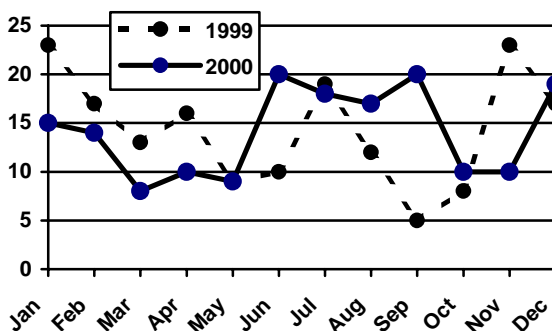
Commercial burglaries, naturally, are a nighttime phenomenon, occurring between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. The most frequent four-hour time block is between midnight and 4:00 a.m. Very often, the day the burglary occurred is unknown—especially if it happened over the weekend, which is most common. Thursday is also a popular day of the week for this crime.

## Offenders

The Cambridge Police Department arrested 14 people for commercial burglary in 2000—all men but one—ranging in age from 13 to 43, with an average age of 26. Four of the arrestees were 16 years old or younger. Nine were from Cambridge, while the remaining five were one each from Somerville, Randolph, Watertown, Boston and Lynn.

## Seasonal Variations

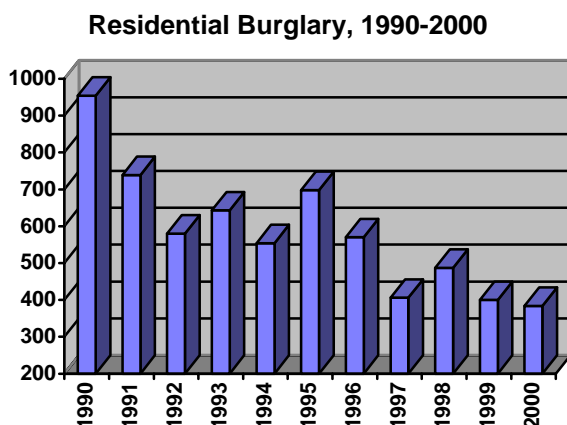
As with many crimes, we do not see many predictable seasonal patterns in commercial breaks. We usually see at least one summertime spike and, for some reason, November and December have been unusually high for the past few years.



## Residential Burglary

Residential burglaries, or “housebreaks,” decreased 4 percent between 1999 and 2000, from 400 incidents to 384. 2000’s total is the lowest reported in over 30 years, representing a decrease of 60% over the past decade.

Housebreaks have been affected greatly by the demise of the “professional burglar.” The traditional summertime burglary pattern, which was once responsible for 200 to 300 breaks a year, has largely disappeared.



## Geography

Predictably, residential burglaries are most likely to occur in densely populated residential neighborhoods. Traditionally the neighborhoods with the highest population and population density have also had the highest housebreak totals. Neighborhood statistics below show both the totals and the per capita totals:

The housebreak totals per neighborhood show that, in 2000, Mid-Cambridge had the highest total, followed by, Area 4, Cambridgeport, and Riverside. These neighborhoods always rank high because of the large, dense residential population, many of whom live in apartments.

When population is factored in, and housebreaks per 10,000 residents are calculated, we find that Area 4, Mid-Cambridge, East Cambridge, and Cambridgeport had the highest *per capita* totals (or the highest housebreak *rates*). Despite citywide per capita decreases, high rates in these adjacent areas signify a clearly discernable area for this crime type. It makes sense to look at housebreaks by population, because the number of residential units in a neighborhood is the primary factor behind that neighborhood’s housebreak total.

### Housebreaks by Neighborhood Per 10,000 Residents\*

Neighborhood	1990s Avg.	1999	2000
East Cambridge	64	40	55
MIT	*	*	*
Inman/Harrington	60	40	35
Area 4	91	73	78
Cambridgeport	78	46	47
Mid-Cambridge	82	37	61
Riverside	42	25	36
Agassiz	50	50	39
Peabody	49	67	30
West Cambridge	50	44	25
North Cambridge	64	35	32
Highlands	*	*	*
Strawberry Hill	44	26	19

*\*These totals are obtained by dividing the housebreaks in the neighborhood by the neighborhood population, then multiplying by 10,000. The neighborhood population is taken from the 1990 census, so figures are not exact. The per capita totals for MIT and Cambridge Highlands were not calculated because both housebreaks and neighborhood populations are statistically insignificant.*

### Housebreaks by Neighborhood

Neighborhood	1990s Average	1998	1999	2000	Change 99-00	% of 00 Total	1990s Rank	2000 Rank
East Cambridge	37	37	23	32	+39%	8%	9	7
MIT	4	3	2	2	NA	0.5%	12	12
Inman/Harrington	43	35	29	25	-14%	7%	7	8
Area 4	60	43	48	51	+6%	13%	4	2
Cambridgeport	71	66	42	43	+2%	11%	2	3
Mid-Cambridge	107	59	48	79	+65%	21%	1	1
Riverside	44	52	26	38	+46%	10%	6	4
Agassiz	26	31	26	20	-23%	5%	10	10
Peabody	55	62	75	34	-55%	9%	5	5
West Cambridge	41	42	36	21	-42%	5%	8	9
North Cambridge	68	44	37	34	-8%	9%	3	6
Highlands	3	4	1	0	-100%	0%	13	13
Strawberry Hill	12	8	7	5	-29%	1%	11	11

The one neighborhood with the largest increase from 1999 to 2000 was also the number one neighborhood for housebreaks in 2000. The Mid-Cambridge neighborhood had been seeing good decreases throughout the latter half of the 90's but due to a continual pattern of housebreaks in the summer and fall this area has been brought back to its position as the number one area for housebreaks.

The largest decrease was seen in the Peabody neighborhood which in 1998 and 1999 was experiencing an unusually high number of breaks most likely due to one local resident who was arrested twice before patterns subsided. In 2000 this neighborhood saw a 55 percent decrease from 1999 when it was the number one neighborhood for housebreaks, returning to its 1990's average position as the fifth most likely area for a housebreak.

Although a majority of the neighborhoods experienced decreases in 2000, increases in four neighborhoods show a geographically significant shift in housebreaks in the new millennium. Extended patterns in the spring summer and fall pushed numbers up in the Area 4, Cambridgeport, Mid-Cambridge, and Riverside neighborhoods. Numerous patterns were identified mostly involving daytime breaks where the suspect entered by force through the front door (with a pry bar or large screwdriver) as well as numerous addresses, which reported breaks into multiple apartment units in a single building.

## Day and Time

45% of housebreaks occur during the workday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. 20% occur during the evening, from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., and 35% occur overnight between 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Each time period features a different type of burglar:

Daytime burglars count on the fact that the residents are not at home. They spend more time in the residence and steal more valuables. They are most likely to strike large apartment buildings in densely-packed residential areas where they will be more anonymous in the visible daylight hours. Their entrances tend to be crude: kicking in the front door or breaking glass.

Nighttime burglars count on the fact that their residents are asleep. They are quieter, entering through an unlocked door or window, or by prying or jimmying a window. They spend a short amount of time in the residence and steal only property that they can carry in a single trip—usually lone items, like a VCR, a purse, or a laptop computer. They are more likely to target houses as well as apartments.

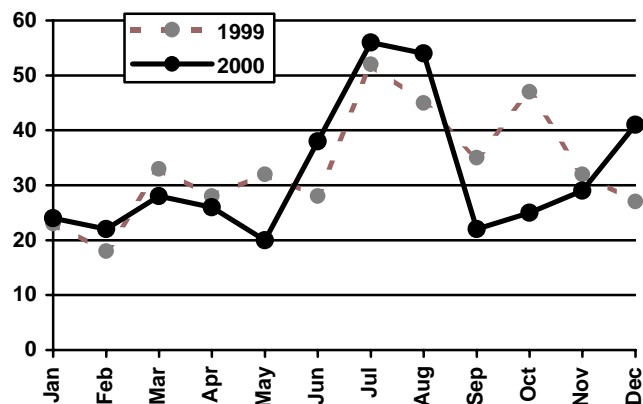
Evening burglars have the most gall (or the least sense) of all. They enter homes knowing that the residents are likely to be at home and awake. They creep through unlocked windows or doors, target cash or other small valuables, and get out quick. Almost all evening burglaries target houses, which typically have more rooms, most of which are vacant, and more points of entry.

Daytime burglaries are most common on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, and almost never happen on weekends. Nighttime breaks favor Friday and Saturday. Evening burglaries show no day of week preference.

## Offenders

The Cambridge Police Department arrested 30 people—all men except two—for housebreaks in 2000. Ages ranged from 14 to 52, with an average age of 27. Two of those arrested were juveniles.

Seven of the arrestees were homeless; another nine were from Cambridge five were from Somerville three from Boston, and one each from Billerica, Leominster, Natick, North Andover, Reading, and West Warwick.



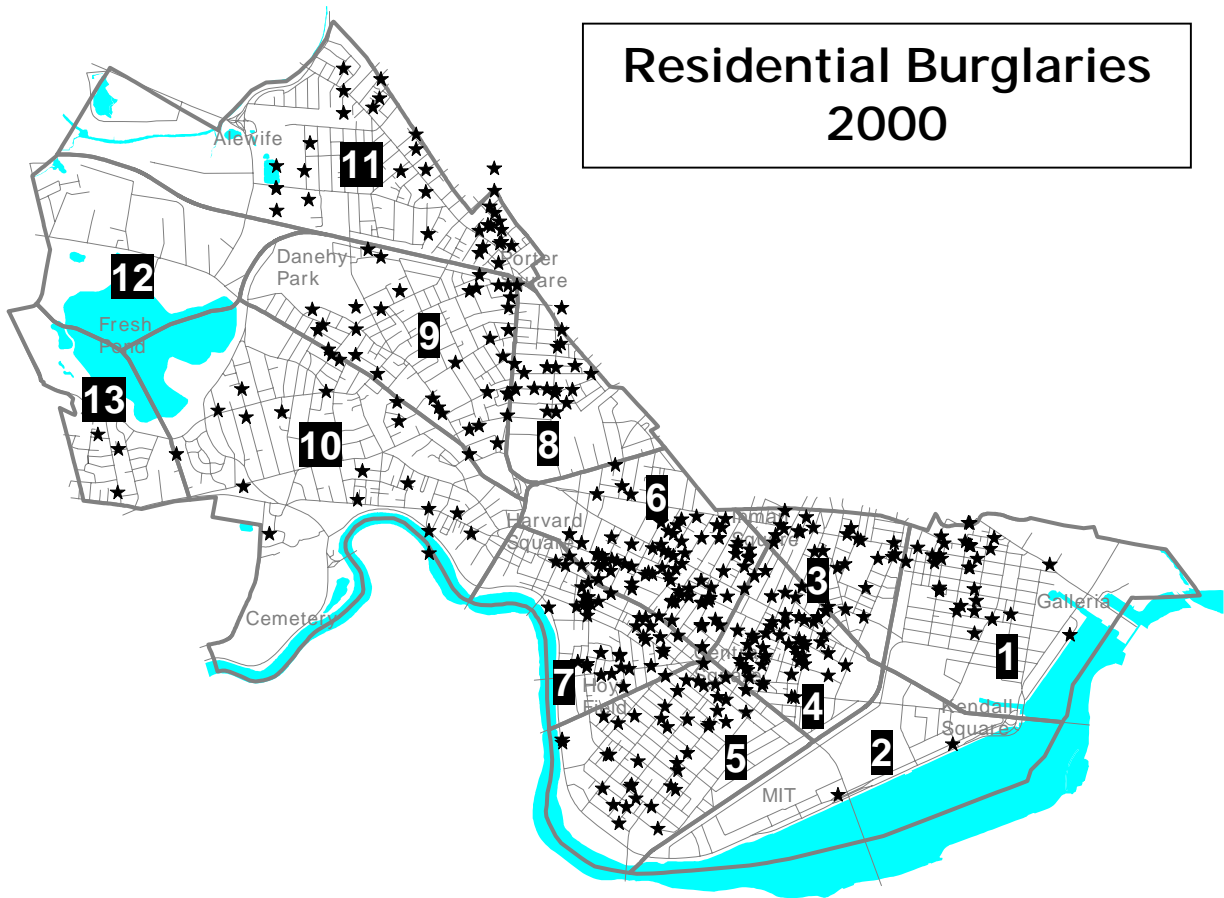
## Seasonal Variations

In the 1980s, a housebreak peak was as certain in the summer as ice cream cones and fireworks. Beginning in the early 1990s, though, the monthly graph flattened out.

Since 1998 this tradition of the summertime peaks has resumed, though not nearly as dramatically as in the 1980s. Patterns struck during both summers over the last two years, sparking these monthly high.



## Residential Burglaries 2000



### Neighborhood Notes

**1. East Cambridge:** ended 2000 14% below its 1990's average although it is up considerably from 1999 alone. Most occurrences are accounted to a summertime pattern on Gore St. and adjacent St.'s.

**2. MIT:** ended 2000 50% below its 1990's average, with only two incidents reported, the same number reported in 1999.

**3. Inman/Harrington:** ended 2000 42% below its 1990's average. Breaks concentrated in two clusters around either end of Cambridge Street. Also experienced breaks likely related to the Mid-Cambridge Area 4 patterns.

**4. Area 4:** ended 2000 15% below its 1990's average. Ranked second for housebreaks in 2000 and has the highest per capita housebreak rate at 78 per 10,000 residents. High concentrations including many multiple unit buildings with multiple breaks in continuing patterns through the summer and fall.

**5. Cambridgeport:** ends 2000 39% below its 1990's average. Concentrated on Brookline St. and Franklin St. as well as a small cluster in the streets just off of the river.

**6. Mid-Cambridge:** ends 2000 26% below its 1990's average. Ranked number one Neighborhood for Housebreaks in 2000. Continued Summer and fall daytime housebreak patterns along Cambridge St. and Broadway rocketed this neighborhood 28 incidents over the second highest Neighborhood.

**7. Riverside:** ends 2000 14% below its 1990's average. Patterns identified adjacent to Mid-Cambridge patterns on Putnam Ave. nearest to Mass Ave. Clusters also recognized near Hancock and Franklin as well as along Western Ave.

**8. Agassiz:** ends 2000 23% below its 1990's average. One identified pattern along Oxford St. and Sacramento St.

**9. Peabody:** ends 2000 38% below its 1990's average. Scattered breaks with no identifiable patterns.

**10. West Cambridge:** ends 2000 49% below its 1990's average. Scattered breaks with no discernable patterns.

**11. North Cambridge:** ends 2000 50% below its 1990's average. One small late year pattern identified during the daytime on streets north and east of Mass Ave. on the Somerville border.

**12. Cambridge Highlands:** ends 2000 300% below its 1990's average. No housebreaks reported in 2000 in this neighborhood.

**13. Strawberry Hill:** ends 2000 58% below its 1990's average. And remains the single neighborhood with the fewest breaks per capita at 19 per 10,000.